

Seattle Light Rail Review Panel

Meeting Notes for October 16, 2002

Agenda Items

- 90% Design for Edmunds, Othello, and Henderson Stations

Commissioners Present

George Blomberg
Jay Lazerwitz
Jack Mackie
Mimi Sheridan

Staff Present

Debora Ashland, Sound Transit
Kathy A Dockins, CityDesign
Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign

LRRP Business

LRRP business was delayed to the end of the meeting in order to allow Steve Arai to present station design information quickly and then leave for another engagement at the AIA office.

90% Design for Edmunds, Othello, and Henderson Stations

Steve Arai, Arai Jackson

Larry Black, Arai Jackson

Norie Sato, STart

Steve reminded everyone that today's presentation would focus on the stations, with Corridor urban design and station plazas being discussed at the next LRRP meeting. Key points of his presentation are summarized as follows:

Edmunds Station

- the longest station in the system, when including the station approach areas
- context is Craftsman-style architecture reflecting character of surrounding residential area
- several changes have been made since 60%
- now has a slightly different canopy coverage with the rafter alignment not centered over the beams as before; this resulted in an additional one foot extension at either end
- canopy height has been reduced for more effective weatherproofing, members are dovetailed in and articulated more than before
- brick base has been slimmed down to be more graceful, with precast base cap behind it
- furniture is now standard to all three stations
- ticket vending machines (TVMs) are now freestanding vs. set into a panel—resulting in more aesthetic appearance and safety (transparency)
- art remains the same—looking glass, basket of light with river rock bases
- color will be Sound Transit blue with brick
- planting done to create barriers, discouraging inappropriate pedestrian crossings

Othello Station

- similar changes as Edmunds re: canopy rafters set into purlins
- metal screen added to assist weather protection around canopy
- Kim lighting integrated into station architecture, also with fluorescent strip lighting at the rear of the canopy
- Art includes granite pieces between the trackways, basin with water from the downspouts, stone as benches at the entries; added a granite cap along the back wall; less articulation on interior of shelter. Art incorporation differs from Othello and other stations

- Back of shelter (facing the street) is "shiplapped" concrete
- Color is Sound Transit blue with red metal tip at rafter ends
- Landscaping design features taller plants toward the center

Henderson Station

- Continuing with the bird/flight/wind "theme"
- Similar changes re: canopy as other two stations
- Have had some technical challenges with respect to the crossover track and storage track, but have worked them out
- OCS towers will be custom-designed (as compared to the rest of the system)
- Resolved center structural element of shelter where the "wings" come together—created a custom piece running down the spine (with fluorescent lighting) that is more delicate than the previous design
- Now adding trees to platform planters—Japanese maples 15'-20' tall—small leaves are acceptable to the engineers
- Art includes dragonfly, art-enhanced system structure building, measuring sticks

Several items are the same for all three stations, including canopy glazing, railings (center, side guardrail), although Edmonds and Othello each have railing sections that are unique to the station.

Discussion:

- What do the stations look like with the train in them? What is the height of the platform? (Canopy is 14' high; platform is 14" above top of rail, which is 16" above street and the intersections.)
- Will you have automated signage for pedestrians and cars? (Yes. The signage will be standard from station to station. Wayfinding will also be the same despite the difference in architecture.)
- I'm interested in the separation of the train from the street. How will someone feel standing next to the lane of traffic? (There will be a functional barrier there.) Landscape maintenance and worker safety is always an issue.
- What about Buster Simpson's artwork? (Changed to a lower platter and bowl instead of stacked bowls up in the air.)

The Panel then focused comments on a station-by-station basis, starting with Henderson station.

- It doesn't look like there is much weather protection here. (No, but not much room or traffic here either.)
- How will people find their way to the train? (Via several design cues—the tactile braid, the tactile warning strip, "rip pad" at the center of the station that indicates where doors will open.)
- What about people bunching up in front of that area? Stations can be exciting, but also confusing, places.
- Will the gate at the system building be closed and locked? (Yes, and alarmed. This is also where the tie and ballast starts.) Know that this area is likely to have pedestrian crossings no matter how much you try to prevent it.
- How many people fit under the canopy? (All canopy coverage is based on peak hour traffic and then some!) How full will the car be when it arrives? People will figure out where to stand on the platform to get a seat.
- Is all the seating shown?

Norie explained that the artwork is occurring in several "layers" with the station artwork the most integrated into architecture, and the plaza pieces the most stand-alone.

- In the system building, is the artwork lit from the room itself or their own lights? (Own lights.)

- You also need enough light to read on the platform.
- I am happy to see the resolution of the service building—these panels are a significant improvement over CMU! Don't make the cables for the dragonfly invisible. I concur with trying to get the transition from underground to overhead utilities located south of the Henderson station.
- I'm a little unhappy to see Buster's piece not be as tall or moveable now...

Comments on Othello station:

- What is the texture of the granite pieces? (We're trying to match the ends. It will be the same granite but a different finish.) With respect to the windscreen, what is the direction of the grid? (Vertical.) Good! That is what I had hoped.
- How close might a person be to a bus when standing on the platform? (You will be about 2 feet higher than the street; including 6' higher than the planters on the street side and the platform is about 14" above the rails.

Debora asked the Panel whether they think the metal grid is worth doing or not.

- Yes, it is worth doing in order to close the gaps where wind will blow in. (We've also heard concerns about using too many materials in the design. What do you think?)
- Don't use blue. Maybe the metal is better in this case.
- Who will place the boulders? (Artist will select and contractor will place under his direction.)
- Several of the local residents have strong concerns about the hiring of contractors, the ability of contractors to aesthetically place the boulders, etc.
- How are the lines on the pre-cast base articulated?
- How will these features "age?"
- Brian's work here has inspired the whole station.
- Where and how often are security concerns?

Edmunds Station:

- Will you use Bomanite or real rock for the art bases? I'm concerned about using "fake" rocks. (We're doing some cost estimating right now.)
- If you cannot afford to use real river rock, the Panel requests that the design come back to us for another review.
- How will the "basket" artwork be lit? From the top? (No, it will be lit using LED fixtures and up lit from the bottom. The basket will be made of bronze that is powder coated.) How much light will this throw vertically? (Not much, if any.)
- What about "tagging?" (We are looking at armor-coat and tempered glass to address vandalism. Having standard sizes of windscreen glass will also help in making quick replacements.)
- What is the distance and time between Edmunds and Othello stations? How distinguishable are they from inside the train? Will passengers know where they are? (There are quite a few elements unique to each station that should make it clear to passengers where they are en route. Lots of cues too from the context, light poles, artwork, and canopy designs.)
- This is 90% design but we still need to talk about color. Are the stations cuing the color, or is the color selected first? A dark color will end up obscuring some of the lovely details in the architecture. One could make an argument for different colors at each station. Can you keep looking at the finish of the color? I realize Sound Transit probably won't change colors at this point, but given the likelihood of additional stations in the future, let's keep looking at how these colors wear before committing to them forever. (The issue for Sound Transit is more about maintenance and durability than using one color for system identity. We need a background color that will suit all situations.)
- You could have a system color and a station or neighborhood color.

Action

It is clear to the Panel that the client, Sound Transit, and their architects, Arai Jackson, have both worked very hard on these stations individually and as a "family of stations." They have successfully met the challenge of using uniform design elements while still creating three stations of distinct character.

At Edmunds, the Panel applauds how the design connects both ends of the station and uses landscaping to make the distance between seem shorter.

At Othello, the Panel appreciates the sensitive handling of the Asian themes in the station architecture and landscaping, noting that the references are clear and yet not heavy-handed.

At Henderson, the Panel appreciates the effort made to design the service structure as something more than strictly a utilitarian through the incorporation of art.

Lastly, the art is well thought-out and well-sited for all three stations and throughout the Corridor.

In conclusion, the Panel is pleased to recommend approval of the 90% design for Edmunds, Othello, and Henderson stations. The Panel would like to note that it does not need to review the stations again unless there are significant changes to the design as presented today (except as noted regarding the river rock bases for the "baskets of light"). Thank you again for an excellent presentation.

LRRP Business

Debora provided a quick update on the construction schedule for South Link, stating that they expect to issue a draft RFQ in November, followed by a RFP in the spring of 2003. The selection of a contractor will be governed by cost as well as other factors, and value engineering will be looked at again at that time. Construction is expected to begin in January 2004, except for Beacon Hill which may begin summer of 2003. Jack reiterated his comfort with allowing Sound Transit to determine if there are design changes that need to be brought back to the Panel for review in the post-90% phase. Debora announced the dates of several upcoming community meetings; October 29th at Holly Park, and November 7th at Rainier Community Center.

There was a discussion about the meeting notes from October 2nd, with Panel disagreement about the box girder discussion. Some Panel members believe that the Panel objected to the girder, while others believe that the Panel isn't happy about it but didn't withhold approval because of it. Jay said he thinks the issue is articulation of the box, rather than its existence at all. Cheryl was asked to revise the meeting notes to reflect the Panel's concern over the girder in the discussion, but not the action, and then ask for Panel approval when more members are available.

The next meeting date was discussed, but no decision made as to a specific date—Tuesday, November 12th or Wednesday, November 13th. Jack noted he would be out of town that entire week.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.